Chapter III

PARTITION:

HORRORS OF THE MIND

A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PARTITION

August 15, 1947, the day of freedom, the culmination of years of struggle against slavery simply meant *Partition* to million on both sides of the border of *Two nations*. It is said that Sadat Hasan Manto refused to remember this day as Independence Day but always referred to the occasion as *Partition*. The human suffering associated with it was more important to him. It is a day that we can hardly look back with nostalgia and pride for the black cloud of *Partition* marred its happiness. India had moved away from the unique ideal of non-violence and behaved in a bizarre, beastly manner. Prof. O.P. Mathur rightly explains it thus, "The birth pangs of Independence were nightmarish with the dance of death"[1]

Partition left in its destructive trail, a host of tortured souls bearing the scars of wounds too deep for tears. The wounds afflicted on the body healed but those on their soul lay branded deeply, defying healing. This affected the psyche of the people who were shorn of their normal human feelings and were filled with horrors of the mind.

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As the lines were drawn on the country for its *Surgery,* the people on the other side suddenly turned aliens in their own land. Those who had lived, bred and died in the land for ages suddenly became aliens there. They were bewildered, befuddled and benumbed when the hand of their neighbour and friend was raised against them menacingly and mercilessly. These shell-shocked people had to flee to the promised but unknown land in search of a safe haven and a tomorrow. They had to go on a voyage in search of their identity. The mass exodus, unprecedented in the history of the country, began. They moved onward bereft of all they had except the ray of hope in their hearts for that rising dawn of freedom that would end all their miseries. But to their horror, they found that they were chasing only a chimera as they found their hopes, dreams and aspirations crumble before their very eyes.

The natives did not receive the inflow of the refugees generously as they took them to be aliens. The government considered them to be an extra burden on the treasury. The refugees felt this and grieved at the deep feeling of resentment among their new neighbours and suffered silently. They became frustrated as the feeling of having been betrayed made them feel lonely and miserable.

These innocent wanderers or refugees as they were now branded were divested of their identity and denuded of all the dignity and honour that surrounded them back in their homeland. The dispossessed, displaced and

desperate human beings with little more than the clothes on their back, pathetically clutching the pitiful belongings they could carry, trudged along in unending lines leading their families and animals from the only home they had ever known. As if the gods were not satisfied, destiny had other things in store for them. The vicious predators belonging to the *enemy* community descended upon the already battered, bruised and desperate humanity in droves shooting, stabbing, slaughtering, looting and raping leaving the dead, mutilated and wounded scattered on the ground; a veritable feast for the vultures.

They had to witness and encounter atrocities of the most heinous kind upon their beloved and upon themselves as well. These barbaric cruelties heaped on them had left them insensate and drained of all feelings. Yet they bore all these with fortitude and a remarkable instinct for survival clutching tenaciously to hope as their last straw marching onward with the single purpose of mind – their promised homeland.

However, they found that they have been tossed from the frying pan into the fire, so to say. They found themselves aliens in their new homeland too. Here, they were *Nobody* – without an identity of their own, as that aura or fragrance of their homeland that surrounded them like a girdle had disappeared. They now stood naked and helpless on the new soil, to establish their roots and

identities anew, to start life literally from scratch sometimes at the twilight o their life making them insecure, indignant, inadequate, depressed, degraded anc above all frustrated reducing them merely into a bundle of nerves and sinews.

Alok Bhalla in his introduction to *Stories of Partition* says of these bewildered people, "They only understand that they have been forcibly separated from their homes and from that *secret life* of their small communities which had flowed through the time even as the world outside had fought its political battles..."[2].

Their small but secure world had been shattered; hurt by the betrayal of their friends, they were forced to evacuate. But they find that the *new world* has given them only an empty allegory of a religious community. Those who braved the animosities and stood rooted in the country of their birth despite strong communal storm, too had to face fierce opposition both within themselves and from without. Their loyalty was divided. It was a perfect state of Hamletian dilemma of to be or not to be. Should they throw their lot with their countrymen or their co-religionists across the border? This mental conflict depraved them psychologically and they became psychic wrecks.

A leading journalist M.J. Akbar explains the peculiar dilemma, which the existence of Pakistan created for Indian Muslims. Since the original claim for the division of the subcontinent came from the Muslims, the guilt of that still

remains and the price that has to be paid still remains. But the real tragedy is that the price of partition is not paid by the people who got Pakistan but those who stayed back in the land of their birth, who were branded as traitors by their Hindu brethren.

This tortured consciousness – the rootlessness, loss of identity and alienation of one's self is pronounced in the partition novels that explore the psyche of tormented human souls. This psychological horror or the mind ful of horrors is the legacy of partition. These tortured souls had to live with their horrors for life – there was no healing.

"Writers display a mixture of fragmented subjectiveness, a sense of cultural displacement or unbelonging, a search for identity in the usable culture or traditions"[3]. Partition writers have succeeded in recreating the mental as well as physical agony of displaced masses trying to root themselves in alien soil and clime.

"The central experience of all these characters are loss. They are lost wanderers without Moses. The experience of disinheritance from life is the reality of modern man's condition"[4]. The modern writer is concerned with the workings of the mind and graphically pictures the battle within the mind, peeps into the seething cauldron of the mind and lets the reader's eyes and mind roam,

taking in avidly– "the feeling of angst, alienation, anguish and futility of life that have struck terrifyingly deep roots and find "the changes in the social conditions and human values are configured in fiction in terms of human relationships and inner conflicts of man"[5].

Sensitive writers have probed deep into the minds of these hapless individuals who exhibit *split personality* and have revealed their innate thoughts and feelings of horror, threadbare. The quest for identity – leit motif of modern fiction is nowhere better pictured than in the partition fiction of India. Apart from the novels, a glimpse of the short stories translated into English too reveal the malaise afflicting the holocaust victims of the novels.

The short story by Um-e-Ummar speaks of the devastation of the hopes of the migrants from Bihar to East Pakistan. They flee Bihar in fear rather than by compulsion and they "fail to trust the rich inwardness of their life in Bihar where they had lived for generations"[6]. But they recall it with nostalgia later in Dhaka where they are aliens. They were brainwashed into believing the logic of exclusive nationalism but they learn too late that neither the community of religion nor the shared ideas of language can guarantee a firm identity. "Religion and linguistic definitions, they realise with horror, do not succeed in establishing the inclusion of some and making all others expendable"[7]. Therefore, they live with a mind full of horrors and nostalgia for the land of their birth.

An unwritten Epic, is a story in diary form by a struggling writer who migrated to Pakistan. The hero, a local bully, is enthusiastic about the idea of *Pakistan* though unaware of what it is. He fights Hindus not because he wants to help the Muslim League, but because he wants to prove that he can wield the club better than the Hindus.

On reaching Pakistan he discovers that he no longer possesses the familiar status once accorded to him, as the new heroes are the manipulators of the political system. Frustrated and nostalgic he returns to Quadirpur only to discover that it has been erased from the new map and replaced by Jatnagar – the city of Jats. He is killed and his head is struck on the peepal tree.

The hero finds that he is an alien in the so-called *land of the pure* to which he went and returns frustrated to the land of his birth but finds to his horror that he is an alien there too. This aptly sums up the paradoxical psychological situation in which the people lived in those troubled times. They were neither here nor there; these mute victims of senseless man made division.

The land of memories by Asif Aslam Farukhi shows that the characters are tormented souls even years after the separation and hate. One cannot restrain one's love for the land of one's birth. A man longs to see his native place and visits India. Immediately he is disturbed by the fact that the old streets, houses

and trees have disappeared. Soon he meets his childhood friend who guides him through the lanes and through the history of old friendship. He meets his Muslim relatives who did not migrate.

Long years of separation and hate could not quell the longing to visit one's birthplace and walk through it savouring the nostalgia of old times. The turmoil between the hatred on one side and the love for birthplace on the other is the cause of tortured consciousness. Although transplanted to the new land, man cannot resist the magnetic pull of his old homeland whose dust was in every pore of his body. Such instances are recorded in history.

Such themes occur in many of the short stories of the period. The atrocities that the refugees suffered and witnessed during the great exodus were engraved so deeply that it made them restive to spew out the poison, to give vent to their indignation.

Khushwant Singh, commenting on the unprecedented carnage witnessed by the subcontinent says that it had been haunting his memory and he could not quell his inner urge to speak. He says, he became disillusioned, disenchanted and angry at man's cruelty to man after the claustrophobic experience of 1947. *The Partition theme*, says Singh, was born out of a *sense of guilt* that he "had done nothing to save the lives of innocent people and behaved like a coward"[8].

It was in 1956 that the first book with Partition as its central theme hit the stands with a bang. Khushwant Singh's ***Train to Pakistan*** was the first to cash in on the theme, which proclaimed the protest of an angry man, victim himself, against the society and at himself for neither the government nor the individual could do anything to stem the terrible tide that swept across the country leaving many dead, wounded and maimed both physically and psychologically.

Train to Pakistan pictures a tranquil sleepy border village suddenly lashed by the storms of communalism. Perfect peace and harmony prevailed among its inhabitants – the Sikhs and the Muslims, each respecting the other and living in easy camaraderie. But everything turns topsy-turvy on the arrival of a trainload of corpses from Pakistan.

Scenes of serenity in the early chapters are contrasted with scenes of heinous crimes. It presents the moving pictures of the people who feel utterly broken as they are compelled to leave the land of their birth and that of their forefathers too. When Iman Baksh, the Muslim priest is asked to leave his Mano Majra and go to Pakistan, the alien land, lest he be tortured by the Sikh refugees who were arriving from Pakistan, he is moved beyond words and tears trickle down the tormented face in a steady stream.

"Imam Baksh wiped a tear from his eyes and blew his nose in the hem of his shirt. What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers"[9]. Imam Baksh choked with grief and broke down, while Meet Singh clasped him in his arms and began to sob. Obviously the new land doesn't hold any fascination for them. After much deliberation, all come to the conclusion that in the interest of Muslims themselves, it will be better for them to leave the village. Imam Baksh resigns himself to the fact of migration and says "All right, if we have to go, we'd better pack up . . . It will take us more than one night to clean out of homes it had taken our fathers and grandfathers hundreds of years to make"[10]. Indeed their roots ran very deep but they had to savagely pull it out in a hurry breaking it in the process. Although Imam Baksh resigns himself to fate, he sobs bitterly but comforts himself and others by quoting verses and substantiating the way of the world.

"Not forever does the bulbul sing

. . .

Not forever lasts the spring

. . .

Not forever reigneth joy

. . .

Friendship not forever last

They know not life, who knoweth this"[11].

Thus he seeks solace in the philosophical thought that joy and sorrow are but two faces of life. He goes home and asks his daughter to pack up to go away. She asks, "Go away? Where?" "I don't know . . . Pakistan! The girl sat up with a jerk 'I will not go to Pakistan', she said defiantly"[12].

This statement by Nooran aptly sums up the attitude of the Muslims who are forced to flee. Pakistan does not mean anything to these uprooted people as they *belong* here. To accept another land as their own is like accepting another woman as their mother, which is absurdly unimaginable. Imam Baksh continues "You may not want to go, but they will throw you out. All Muslims are leaving for camp tomorrow"[13].

Nooran unable to comprehend the situation asks naively "Who will throw us out? This is our village. Are the police and the Government dead?"[14] Again, the confidence in the law and order proves futile as the law makers themselves turn law breakers as even they were not free from prejudices. To the bewilderment of the people they too participated in violence and rioting with abandon. The tormented people watch in horror and utter amazement as the forces of evil are let loose from the Pandora's box, as it were.

However, the people still clung on to the straw of hope that these demoniac forces are transitory and sanity will prevail sooner or later. They believed that the separation was temporary and things would revert to the same old familiar

manner as had been for centuries. The wrenching away from one's own land and one's own circle of friends and society proved to be a nightmarish experience.

There was a crisis of values suffered by the people. The common people who went about their jobs suddenly found themselves inactive and tongue tied in the face of frenzy. Hukum Chand, the Govt. official is shocked by the gruesome spectacle of the corpses in the train in unnatural death but does nothing to save the refugees from being massacred though forewarned of the plot to exterminate them. He lapses into inactivity and wants to project a picture of having acted responsibly. The people are so goaded and excited by the stories of communal carnage and happenings elsewhere in the country that they hardly heed their religious leaders. They turn bestial. Bhai Meet Singh can only petition God to transform these beasts back into sensitive human beings.

Iqbal Singh, the English-educated young man of communist leanings dreams of a Utopian state. "He has all the theories but lacks courage to act according to his convictions in the face of crisis. He is only self-conscious about his image"[15]. Iqbal's ideals wither in the heat of the communal fire and he finds himself unfit for the Revolution that he hoped to bring about with his Western education.

Pakistan to these simple people means nothing. All they knew was that they were born and bred in this land and so were their forefathers. They had grown, spread branches and roots, which sank deep into the earth embracing each and every particle of the soil. To uproot them, to break them and plant them in an alien soil and clime would mean the systematic destruction of their minds which were filled with horrors of every nature.

Manohar Malgonkar, another partition novelist in his novel ***A Bend in the Ganges***, portrays his characters in the throes of psychological horrors of mind. The heart rending wrenching away from one's own land is nowhere more poignantly pictured as in the last chapters of the novel. His character Tekchand, a scion of an aristocrat family born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth lived in opulence lording over his empire of companies. He was a connoisseur of art and collected exquisite antique art and artifacts. He had always thought of bequeathing his immense wealth to his children, as his forefathers before him did. Never did a shadow of doubt cross his mind that he would have to leave all his inheritance and wealth, which had taken years to build up. Even when the rumblings of riots reached him, he scoffed it aside as he thought he was impregnable in his bastion of wealth.

Moreover, he felt that he was among his people, his brethren who had been the beneficiaries of his munificence. He now pondered over his indiscretion and how he unheeded his wife's timely warning to evacuate from Lahore to the

safety of Delhi. ". . . But he had laughed at her fears. Now that he himself wanted to go it was not easy. Your car would almost certainly be waylaid . . . Men and women blind with hatred would rush from all sides to hack its occupants and rob whatever they possessed."[16]

Tekchand could never imagine that such barbaric acts could be possible in the middle of twentieth century. He felt that "the moment the grip of British power was loosened, the population of the subcontinent had discarded non-violence overnight and were spending themselves in orgies of violence which seemed to fulfill some basic urge"[17]. The fears of the people as the British left are brilliantly evoked by Malgonkar. Tekchand's humanitarian concern for the public had resulted in a number of schools and hospitals which he and his family had gifted to the town. He enlists his family's contribution to the city and how there was a street named after his father, a library after him, a maternity home and girl's school after his wife and adds "That it should have come to this. After a lifetime spent in this part of India, in this town and giving oneself to it and taking from it letting one's roots sink deeper and deeper"[18]. This sense of being wrenched out suddenly from one's own land was the predicament of many a family during the troubled times.

In his anguish he cries out to Sundari, his daughter. "This is my city, as much as that of... Hussains, the Chinais. I, my family, have done as much as any of them to make it prosperous and beautiful. And what are they doing? Burning it down . . ."[19] This was the agony suffered by the prosperous Hindu business

men in Pakistan who had expended their wealth and talent in building up the city and in turn had profited by it. They felt betrayed by the land of their birth and wounded by its indifference and callousness towards them.

Sundari, who had never seen her father in this light was taken aback by his outburst and tries to calm him, but unable to bear the betrayal of the city and its people so dear to him he bursts out. "Damn it . . . I have to talk about it to somebody . . . or my head will burst. I trusted them and scorned your mothers' fears . . ."[20]. He them blames himself for not having gone earlier because he wanted to keep his possessions which he had built up over the years, his beautiful house, its furnishings and the collection of Indian bronzes so dear to him. He spews his anger at the politicians who divided the land and says: "suddenly someone has decided that this land which is mine should be a foreign territory-just like that, because some hooligans take it into their heads to drive all the Hindus away from their land. I have to leave everything and go, pulled by the roots"[21].

Tekchand, the self-assured, suave gentleman never even dreamt of a state like this. But when it hit him squarely and starkly – the inhumanity, insensibility and savagery of man, his self-confidence, assurance, poise, power and pomp cracked like china. His erect carriage elegant and poised, slumped and stooped. He became weak, soft and pliable. A man, who ordered, governed and controlled companies, was willingly led by his daughter. Sundari tries to console him by

saying that he is luckier than most others as he has money and a home in Delhi when he passionately exclaims "Money! . . . Do you suppose all the money in the world will make up for this?"[22]. This was another horror, which the rich migrants had to contend with. Those who where financially secure could not bear to part with their prized possessions which had sentimental value to them. Money was not the only criterion, the fact that they had to leave behind the valued treasures and memories led to their despair.

For Tekchand, a connoisseur of art – his bronzes were not merely sculptures but living beings that communed with him. He says: "True art that lived a thousand years ago . . . still lives and breathes"[23]. Leaving them to be destroyed by vandals was like destroying a part of himself – so much so he even toyed with the idea of perishing with them, after sending his wife and daughter away. For in the corner of his heart he still believed that it was his land and his people who "would come to their senses, as soon as this wave of hatred had passed, they would realise he was one of themselves"[24]. Obviously Tekchand, a humanist himself, believed that the mob fury will subside and eternal values will triumph over this evil ultimately. He then thinks of the times when both the Hindus and Muslims rejoiced together at the impending freedom after long years of slavery until the sword fell on the land to rend it.

Tekchand's state of mind can be aptly understood by his son, Debi's musings on the train towards Lahore. He ponders over the paradoxical situation- how a week ago they all had been citizens of India awaiting jubilantly the freedom. "Today they were Muslims . . . the counterparts on the other side Hindus . . . both sides making for a border. They were at the moment stateless citizens . . . Political expediency had suddenly transformed them into refugees . . ."[25]. Tekchand was bewildered by the sudden change of his status as a *refugee* in his own land. Even trusted servants of years had deserted the family. He felt that power and money turned to naught at that moment. They were "cut off as by a surgical knife"[26] and could only dream of a future in the Promised Land. Tekchand who witnessed the brutal murder of his beloved wife by Shafi had lost his moorings.

Although he followed his daughter and Gian like a puppet, he kept up the refrain. "They killed her, my Laksmi – and I have left her behind . . . All along I promised I wouldn't . . .She would never have left me"[27]. This mental torment reduced him to a psychic wreck. For Sundari it was heart-rending to see her father, once the *King* of a vast empire raving like a mad man. He listens to the announcement made in the convoy and his plaintive, pathetic words sum up the feelings of displaced men. "They are going to my land, he mumbled. I'm running away from it leaving my wife alone, lying in that room"[28]. He was yet to comprehend the meaning of *Partition*, how a part of land alone belonged to him

now, while the other part, the one in which he had lived all his life had to be abandoned. Try as he might, Tekchand could not come to terms with the fact that he was going to *his land* for his *heart and soul* lay in Lahore, the land which nurtured him and was nurtured in turn by him.

Manohar Malgonkar, an army man himself could not resist picturing the division of the army during partition. His portrayal of army life and practices smacks of the realism of an insider. Friendship was sacred and it knew no religion or caste or creed but the simple code of honour that binds friends together even in the jaws of death.

Manohar Malgonkar pictures the psychological conflicts between friends as a consequence of partition and division of the army in his novel ***Distant Drum***. Abdul Jamal and Kiran Garud had worked together during the communal riots. "Neither of them had been conscious of the fact that they had belonged to the opposing factions. However, partition found them fighting from adverse camps. But after the partition they are left to square the circle of private versus national loyalties"[29].

The friends had to contend with each other both physically and emotionally. This throws their mental equilibrium out of gear. Friends became foes overnight once the axe of division was struck, which was difficult for the minds to comprehend. Malgonkar depicts individuals reaching out for meanings and values in a shattered collapsing world. He has

deftly pictured the different shades of emotions passing through the screen of the mind – anger, bitterness, hatred, frustration, compassion, kindness and finally love which seems to crown all.

Abdul Jamal and Kiran Garud meet each other in a combat as representatives of their respective countries (Pakistan and India) who are now sworn enemies. But their love for each other breaks the army codes and discipline asunder and they drink champagne together defying their superiors and even risking their lives. However, the mental trauma of the two friends thus contenting against each other does prove the absurdity of the division and how friends turned foes overnight for no valid reason. National loyalties obviously clashed with personal loyalties. The impulsive meeting of the friends brought a new awareness of poignant realities into sharp relief – it brought the vacuity and the painful awareness of the memories of a shared past. It severed old ties of friendship – a traumatic consequence of the division upon the consciousness of people. Suddenly the individual is faced with a moral predicament, which is at odds with his sentiments.

The sudden clash of loyalties between intimate friends and neighbours, engineered by Partition bewilders the people with its absurdity and pains them so much that some pay little heed, and even defy the laws which proclaim that the man from the *other* country as devil incarnate or a sworn enemy. ***Distant Drum*** shows the absurdity of partition which is but a mere line on the ground; the

hearts of people, undivided still beat with love for their friends on the other side of the border. This constant pull of loyalties filled them with psychological horrors.

Chaman Nahal, the consummate artist that he is, does not stop by merely describing the stupendous drama in history – Partition, the mass massacres and vast influx of refugees, but he dramatizes the impact of the momentous events of history on a few individuals particularly the members of the family of Lala Kanshi Ram and his friends. He makes an interpretative probe into the minds of the innocent victims caught up in a whirlpool of communal frenzy and the emotional impact felt by the divided communities. "Nahal's greatness lies in the fact that he is able to bring out the agony of mind in a subtle manner"[30]. Nahal leads the reader into the workings of the minds of the individuals who see them displayed like a transparent watch.

Azadi registers the apprehension of insecurity, before and after the partition, suffered by displaced minorities. It graphically brings out the traumatic incidents that took place in the border areas immediately after the announcement of the Partition. There is utter disbelief and bewilderment among the minorities soon to be displaced represented by the well-satisfied grain merchant of Sialkot – Lala Kanshi Ram and his neighbours. The partition was illogical. Nahal shows that "drawing lines on a map is easy but uprooting men from their home is difficult"[31].

Lala Kanshi Ram, while he is preparing to migrate remembers his childhood passion for eating earth and when about to leave Sialkot, the urge assails him again, showing his strong passion for the land of his birth. Forced to migrate to India, Lala and his neighbours encounter excruciating experiences. With the precision of a psychiatrist Nahal delineates the mental horrors of the individuals who are coming to terms with their new status – refugees. Their contented, prosperous and peaceful life is brutally shattered as they are plucked away from their cocoon of comfort and are mercilessly thrown into the harsh world of horrors. Lala Kanshi Ram found himself an alien in the land of his forefathers with the announcement of partition. He is forced to face the paradoxical predicament of being a refugee in his own land, which is revolting to his sense of propriety. It seems absurd to him and he shouts, "I was born around here. I be a refugee in my own home?"[32].

Lala felt himself weak and old. The very thought of starting his life anew in an alien place and among unfamiliar people distressed him. Faced with the pangs of separation from the land of his birth, he undergoes a deep psychological crisis. Suddenly the familiar world and the people around him changed and became menacing. He vents his agony on the British officer. In sheer disgust and disappointment at his predicament, he holds the English responsible for their psychophysical crisis.

As he watched his wife and son packing to leave for the refugee camp he felt as if his own flesh was being stripped from his body. He felt himself "standing before a tunnel where he could not see the other end. How long was the tunnel? And it all looked so unnecessary, so superfluous to him – What they were going through"[33]. Like Lala the bewildered refugees were in front of a dark future. They knew not what terrors it held for them. They had not asked for partition it was unceremoniously thrust upon them without their sanction. No arrangements had been made to meet the consequences of the mass exodus. They felt the futility of what they were going through. Nonetheless they were caught up in it for no crime of their own.

Lala sets out with a million others to seek his identity as he was plucked from his own hearth and home. He was adrift like a dead log in a river moving aimlessly and unable to anchor himself in the new environment. He now suffered untold agony of the mind – despair, dejection, depression, loss of identity, loss of honour and finally frustration making him a psychological wreck.

In his desperation he shouts at Bill Davidson, an English officer, with belligerent eyes, ". . . All that had taken nearly thirty years to build is being lost, because you refused to protect me"[34]. Lala Kanshi Ram, like many others firmly believed that the sudden withdrawal of the British forces was responsible for his plight.

The ordeal begins – he hears with sadness, the news of his daughter's and son-in-law's brutal death at the hands of communalists, which numbs him. He keeps his sorrow locked up in the deep recesses of his heart, which gnaws at his soul. Arun, his son who went to identify the dead bodies is horror stricken when his one time neighbour and friend – Ghani spits venom at him and says maliciously that his sister and brother-in-law were dead and that he himself had burnt them.

Arun's melancholic mind pining for his Muslim lover, Nur finds an anchor in Chandini the charwoman's daughter, but even that is snuffed out when Chandini is kidnapped by the lusting Muslim mob leaving him in the agony of loneliness. Sunanda's plight rouses him and he kills his one time friend, an army officer and classmate Rahmatullah Khan, for dishonoring her. Sunanda, dishonoured and bereft of her husband leads a mechanical life full of horrors of partition. She has been scarred for life. Wearily, Lala, his family and the remaining handful of friends plod along, each carrying the scars of inflicted agony. Benumbed by it, they reach Delhi. "A sadness weighed on their hearts and each felt stifled and crushed"[35].

Lala's efforts to find a private home and the insensibility of the corrupt officials frustrates him. He felt "So exposed and so naked, so defenseless, so lost and bent and confused,"[36] suffering so much from "weariness of the spirit"[37].

And it is here that he weeps for the first time in his life. "Those are not ordinary tears but are the tears of a defeated, frustrated man whose dreams have been shattered and all his protests rendered futile"[38]. It reveals the psychology of a disheartened, disenchanted and degraded personality.

Even the material loss did not shake him but the loss of dignity and honour shook him to the very core and he breaks down. He stopped wearing the turban because he says that a turban was a sign of respect and dignity and he had no dignity left – "He now wore a forage cap or sat bareheaded, advertising his humble position to the world"[39]. The once prosperous dignified man is reduced to a mental and physical wreck due to the *line* drawn on the land which suddenly made him an alien in his own land.

The feelings of the masses is voiced by the minor characters – the police officials thus: "How do you cut a country in two, . . . There was Muslim in every corner of India where there was a Hindu . . . How were they going to cut up the machinery of the government?"[40]. That this absurdly impossible deed – Partition, was accomplished with no regard for its inhabitants resulted in the mammoth tragedy.

Nahal has highlighted the tremendous psychological impact of the events upon the minds of the people which appeared as the complete loss of contact and break down of communication, leading to a state of complete isolation and

alienation making each a prisoner of his own *single self.* The novel strongly depicts the minds of the people who were dismembered by division on an epical scale. People though living together, became strangers, as they were alienated, dejected souls who had lost all communication with each other. Lala Kanshi Ram feels that he has lost the ability to communicate with his wife and son and is unable to lay bare his heart to them. The affection and compassion was there, yet somewhere the line of communication was broken. His wife and son also feel likewise. Their respect for Lala, the head of the family was there but something had driven a wedge between them. They were unable to reach out to the other. The old familiarity and the ease between them were lost. It was as if the suffering had erected a wall, a barrier between their souls. They lay fully awake not being able to fathom each other's minds and feelings restless "Not being able to talk to each other and feeling guilty about it"[41]. This loss of communication was another horror inflicted by partition in the minds of the guileless people.

Nahal, the psychological novelist that he is, succeeds in presenting his characters in a transparent form. The reader can see for himself the working of the inner organs – the nervous system with its varied hues of emotions and the circulatory system with blood coursing through the arteries and capillaries – the conscious and unconscious conflicts, disappointments and frustrations which sway it.

The last three paragraphs of the novel describing the whirring of Sunanda's sewing machine is suggestive and symbolic of the mechanical life of the refugees devoid of any real feelings. They had become mere machines carrying out the routine of life. They are even unable to protest, except stray incidents of vehement angry, intense outbursts. "Not being able to go to sleep and feeling angry about it"[42]. That was another ruin *Azadi* had caused - the spiritual wedge and the psychological rift had made them like the twin banks of a river, which can never meet. They had to live like mere machines devoid of any real feelings of love and contact with each other carrying the scars of the burden of life, which refused to heal.

The anguish of a sensitive man trapped in the holocaust is rendered by Nahal almost into a musical piece. There is anger, bitterness, disappointment, frustration, loss of identity and even loss of communication between members of a family due to psychological barriers that have come between them. However, the victims strain their every nerve in an effort to reconcile and accommodate, to come to terms with the inevitable and to accept the vicissitudes of life with fortitude. These conflicting emotions turn the mind of the victims into a veritable battlefield where they are constantly at war with themselves, reducing them to psychological wrecks and their minds full of horrors– a fallout of partition.

Attia Hosain, the only Muslim woman novelist, has not only given the Muslim perspective of partition but has probed into the inner landscape of a Muslim family. Her novel ***Sunlight on a Broken Column*** centres on the life of a narrator heroine–Laila, the orphan daughter of a wealthy and distinguished Muslim family. She grew amidst the political struggle for freedom in a house symbolically named *Ashiana* – the nest or the home. The family was deeply rooted in Lucknow and they followed Gandhiji's non-violence with nationalistic fervour. But the whole trouble started when religion entered politics and degenerated into a communal frenzy. Soon, seeds of separation took roots and partition followed. "The idea of partition brought the fear of the Muslims into sharper relief"[43]. Muslims, being the minority community, were beset with anxiety and fear of Hindu dominance They felt that the minorities would be marginalised. The Partition heightened this fear of Muslims who braved the communal holocaust and stayed behind in the land of their forefathers, as they would become the targets of victimisation.

The novel, as an individual's quest for identity, subtly portrays the psychological turbulence – the guilt and sorrow of the Muslim lady because the original impulse of the Partition came from the Muslims. Saleem, Laila's cousin gives vent to Muslim fears that in free India the Hindu majorities would rule

Muslims. He feared the Hindus' feeling of revenge and stated, "the majority of Hindus have not forgotten or forgiven the Muslims for having ruled over them for hundreds of years. Now they can democratically taken revenge"[44]. This feeling that their community would be discriminated led to anxiety – and fear over their future in India.

His aunt Saira too shared Saleem's fears and distrust of Hindus and she suddenly bursts out, "Oh! Dear, there is no question; it could be better to have the British stay on than the Hindus ruling."[45] The heated and at times, objective arguments over the dining table finally split the family which was directly based upon the repercussions of partition in the country. Relationships were torn apart as tempers flared and views clashed. The family tree shuddered as it was wrenched by some of the members. While Saleem decided to throw his lot with Pakistan, Kemal, his brother preferred to stay in India. The novel focusses on the effects of the partition on the family in which Laila is brought up, far away from the scene of tragedy namely Lucknow, which is the locale of the novel. Years after, Laila came to pay a visit to *Ashiana*, the house associated with many memories and she explained, "My most private emotions were contained by this house, as much a part of its structure in its every brick and beam"[46].

The houses become repositories of the lives of their owner so much so that long after their departure they continue to stand sentinels to them, their ways and beliefs, and Laila says "Its memories condensed my life as in a sunray"[47].

She felt embarrassed to find strangers living in the rooms where she had spent a good portion of her life. She felt grieved at the thought that these strangers were labeled *refugees* while her cousin an *evacuee*.

Laila's presence in the home brought tears in the sunken eyes of the Hindu servant Ram Singh. He lamented the great change brought about by the unhappy developments. He said to Laila: "The house Bitia, this is not how you should have come to the house. I saw you grow up in it, and I should have seen your children and the children of Kemal Mian and Saleem Mian grow up in it. Bhagwan should have taken me from this earth before I saw this happen"[48]. Though he is a Hindu he too feels anguished at the fact that years of relationship with the family are torn apart.

To Laila, the house was a living entity. The tears and words of the old servant opened her closed heart. "She turned towards the house with every nerve alive and quivering and found it a living being. In its decay she saw the way of life buried and the other coming to the end"[49]. Saleem had left for Pakistan while Kemal remained behind. The Old World had undergone a tremendous change. Power and privileges no more existed. Kemal was left with no alternative but to sell *Ashiana*, which was a home of peace, rest and happiness. Aunt Saira took offence at the sudden change and felt grievously irritated by the ways of the government. She feared that the new devices had been strategically planned to

help the Hindus and to harm and molest the Muslims left in India. Her cry gave vent to the feelings of a person who lost all wealth in a deluge and fell on evil days. She railed at the government, at the way of the world, and at her son and his wife.

> "What right have they to steal what is ours? Is there no justice? . . . Did they not consent to the partition themselves. Why treat those people like enemies who went over? Were they not given a free choice? . . . If they want to drive out Muslims why not say it like honest men?. . . Hypocrites! Cowards! It is good Saleem has gone away. They will destroy you and all fools like you who have trusted them. The Banias!"[50].

This dejected, disillusioned passionate outburst captures the feeling that the Muslims who stayed behind in India had committed a blunder. They were unsure in free India. For them the only place of comfort and refuge was Pakistan – their *neo paradise* across the border. Aunt Saira's passionate outburst shows clearly the horrors flitting past in quick succession in the minds of the Muslims who bravely stayed behind. Kemal accepted the inevitable and tried to reason with Saira. But all his efforts to quieten her proved futile and in her bitterness, she accused him of his anti-traditional beliefs and actions and of his defending a government hating the Muslims. This made Kemal retaliate bitterly and he asks

her why she did not accompany Saleem to Pakistan. Saira-Kemal episode shows the bitterness of the tortured Muslims who remained in India after the partition.

Laila surveyed the political scene through their uncle Hameed who had seen the gradual crumbling of all his dreams and ambitions. Saleem tried to persuade Kemal to go to Pakistan for he feared "inculcated hate persisted, then it will be worse than a civil war"[51]. He, like many other Muslims, feared discrimination against the Muslims in free India. However Kemal did not want to split the family. He said that Saleem's going to Karachi would mean going to another country. "Don't you see, we will belong to different countries, have different nationalities? Can you imagine every time to see each other. We'll have to cross national frontier? May be even have to get visas"[52].

Kemal's statement is the expression of the *lament* for partition. It was tragic that the country had been divided. Saleem dreamed of a bright future in Pakistan while Kemal asserted that India was his country. "This is my country. I belong to it. I love it. That is all . . ."[53]. Salem warned Kemal that in India he would have "to face suspicion, prejudice, even hatred"[54]. Kemal reiterated that he was unmindful of suspicion and hate and says that he has perhaps already done that. Saleem, who went to his, new home, felt an alien there. On his visit to India he was touched to find his old friends unchanged, "He was glad of the feeling of recognized identity in Hasanpur after having lived among strangers, who knew him as an individual without background"[55].

This statement speaks volumes of the feeling of alienation in Saleem caused by the partition. This feeling is contrasted with the feeling of association and identity that he experienced when he came to India on leave after his two-year stay in Pakistan. Those who left never felt at home in their *new homeland.*

The division of the country led to the division of the Muslim house with a hoary past. The partition brought the parting of ways of its different members. The novel, packed with feelings, succeeds in evoking in our mind the great tragedy of partition emotionally as well as psychologically.

Raj Gill, the Sikh writer, pictures how his community, betrayed by the friends and the land of their birth were no longer the same human beings that they were once; but relationships degenerated and sometimes turned bestial in nature. Dalipjit, a full-blooded Sikh youth of eighteen, presents the entire experience of the disturbed Sikhs through his central consciousness, in Raj Gill's novel, ***The Rape.*** The lad's emotional turmoil finds a parallel in the history of the nation and he is amazed to find "a total change in the political climate of Punjab"[56].

He was shocked to find that principles disappeared as deference to age had gone. The degradation, he felt, was overpowering. He was numbed to find that his own father had raped his beloved, fully aware of the fact that the young woman who had been given shelter in the house was his son's beloved. Values had ceased to hold any meaning for them and they had gone berserk.

Dalipjit is at a loss to understand the strange world turned upside down around him, a world full of betrayals and deceits – where girl betrays her lover, people betray their country and father betrays his son.

It was Amro, his childhood friend, who explained the situation to the dazed Dalipjit who seethes and froths in rage for it was a season of betrayals. She says "They weren't the same people among whom we were born and brought up . . . Nobody in the whole village is what they ought to have been - respectable, upright, honourable, working people. They are a betrayed lot. No doubt they won't hesitate to betray"[57]. She explains further saying that "it is a game now. The betrayed must betray anybody, everybody, their own kith and kin, parents, brothers and sisters. There's no ethic involved in it"[58]. Dalipjit in his disturbed state of mind goes into a reverie and he believes that he had murdered Mahatma Gandhi for his betrayal – for consenting to Partition. Though the Mahatma was actually murdered in January 1948, Dalipjit was not prepared to believe that Gandhiji was dead only now. He had *killed* him long before. The author conveys to the reader how the sudden transformation of normal human beings turned them into beasts prowling for prey. He says: "Something was happening to them, something subtle, radical, changing their personality their outlook, their behaviour. The community feeling, the sense of oneness, and well-known generous, extrovert spirit of the people all disappeared"[59]. These were replaced by the hurts, which made them into hungry brutes who fought, destroyed and killed.

Raj Gill skillfully portrays the psychic protest and dazed mental turmoil of the person undergoing traumatic experiences, how the people were suddenly deranged as if madness had seized them. He has skillfully delineated the minds of people wounded by betrayals in deep throes of anguish and turmoil, seeking an outlet. In their frustration they resort to irrational behaviour and vent their fury in an orgy of violence, which would shame even the beasts.

It is H.S. Gill who in his novel ***Ashes and Petals*** records the horrendous episode of how the Hindus and Sikhs killed their own women – wives, daughters and even grand daughters when there was an imminent danger of being attacked by the Muslim hooligans in a desperate bid to save their *honour*. He captures the instant in the mindscape of man who had to take split second decision – a brutal one, to kill his own flesh and blood. Risaldar Santa Singh killed his fourteen-year old granddaughter in cold blood with her brother Ajit – a mute witness to the gruesome murder. Santa Singh was unable to erase the memory of the spilled blood even years after and bore the burden of guilt and horror of the incident stoically. His grandson Ajit now a cavalry officer seeks Santa Singh's permission to marry a Muslim girl Salma and the old man exclaims passionately: "What have you come down to, my grandson? Have you forgotten Baljeeto, your sister? Your poor sister I had to shoot in the train, Have you forgotten the partition and the Mussalman?"[60].

The consequences of that fateful day forever colour the attitude of Santa Singh toward Muslims and his heart was permanently scarred. His hatred towards the Muslims who were responsible for his illogical but necessary action lay festering in his heart all these years. He was unable to extend his love towards a person even when the person was an innocent one from *that community*. This abstract hatred which simmered in the minds of the victims often-erupted in explosive violence sometimes bordering a war between the two nations as witnessed time and again in the history of two nations.

The horrors of the mind fostered and rankled so much that the displaced people who were rootless were still searching for their identities in a bid to root themselves even in the eighties. The post-modern writers who were preoccupied with the interior landscapes and the loss of identity due to partition found a synoptic parallel in modern man's quest for self.

Salman Rushdie in his path-breaking novel, ***Midnight's Children*** encapsulates the experiences of three generations of Sinai family. It spans a period of seventy years in modern Indian history. Saleem's life covers the period from Independence to the lifting of emergency conveying a gamut of major landmarks in history like the partition of the nation. Rushdie uses fantasy as "a device that makes it possible for him to reach unreachable areas of human expanse to explore and expound the psyche of the entire sub continent that Rushdie's protagonist represent"[61]. His stories continue in a world of

timelessness in another direction and seek identity for the protagonist. Speaking of uprooting from one's place of birth he says, "Salem Sinai's displacement from his *Bombay roots* results in a haze of unreality in his being completely emptied of history and plunged like India itself into a state of moral amnesia"[62].

The migrants who hastily pack up to catch up with the convoy with fear of life on one side and hope for future on the other, were a moving sight which evoked compassion even in the hardest hearts. Rushdie's stroke of pen recreates these miserable migrants before our mindscreen. He says even when migrants pack their past "into bundles and boxes" and try to take it with them "on the journey something seeps out of the treasured mementos and old photographs until even the owners fail to recognise them"[63].

These ill-fortunate migrants are clutching on opportunity for change of their status as a refugee and to be recognised as the citizen of the new nation. Rushdie, while describing Saleem Sinai's grandmother's predicament says "for all her presence and bulk, she was adrift in the universe"[64]. Rushdie who cannot forget his roots in India says:

> "As for me: I, too, like all migrants, am a fantasist. I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I too, face the problem of history: What to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change. And to come back to the *roots* idea, I should say that I haven't managed to shake myself free of it completely"[65].

This nostalgia of rooted past and the trauma of a rootless present is the locus of Saleem's quest. He resorts to fantasies with the fond hope that at least in fantasies he can happily find his roots with the Indian psyche. It becomes an obsession with him to establish his identity and retrieve his troubled psyche caused by uprooting himself from his motherland during Partition.

He records his anger at the selling of his childhood home in Bombay and the forced migration. He longs for the homeland he has lost. He says: "Writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt"[66].

The nostalgia of what it might have been pulls the migrants back to their roots. Dilip Fernandez "notices the angst, loneliness and rootlessness of Rushdie"[67]. Rushdie compares his Indian and Pakistani experiences and says: "the difference between my India, Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence – that in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disoriented, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies"[68].

This ambivalence and rootlessness resulting from the loss of identity frustrated the individuals who tried to seek out their lost identity with a view to root themselves and affirm faith in themselves that they too *belong*. They are

constantly engaged in a search for their *roots*. Rushdie who was born in India migrated to Pakistan and then to England, but the sense of rootlessness haunted him as seen in his outpourings in fiction which bears the tinge of nostalgia for the land of his birth.

The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh pictures the bewilderment of the people who are cut off from their homeland – they are unable to see *the shadow lines* demarcating the two nations and are unable to comprehend the sudden change in their nationality. Ghosh builds an interestingly vivid, funny and moving story set in India, Bangladesh and England. He tries to find the meaning of political freedom and nationalism in the modern world. He focusses our attention on the *shadow lines* we draw between people and nations, which is both an absurd illusion and a source of terrifying violence"[69].

Ghosh addresses his readers a few questions like Socrates regarding the concept of freedom which man blindly inherits without even as much as casting a thought upon it. His characters are trying to discover the meaning of complete freedom – whether freedom of individual is linked with the society and whether absolute freedom is a possibility for an individual, a community or for a nation in the context of division of the country. Partition generated fear and anxiety in the minds of the people forced to flee from the land of their birth which suddenly turned alien to them. The individuals bewildered, are frantically trying to find what freedom means to them.

Amitav Ghosh skillfully weaves his story around the Chowdharys of Bengal and the Prices of London whose relationship spans three generations. The narrator – a child comes into close contact with the protagonists of the story. His grandmother with her East Bengali connections and her memories of her girlhood days spent in a sprawling house in Dhaka goes in search of her old uncle left behind in what was now East Pakistan. Her nostalgic trip was a symbolic search for a point of fixity to return to her home. But the preparations for the trip bewilders her because she has inexplicably become a foreigner in her own home.

Seventeen long years after the partition, the narrator's grandmother was going to visit Dhaka with her sister Maya Debi. She was told by her son at the airport that she would have to fill the disembarkation card with her nationality, her place and date of birth. She got visibly nervous as she would have to fill in Dhaka as her place of birth in that form. At that moment, she was "unable to understand how her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality"[70] which baffled her. She wanted to know if the line dividing the nation was visible. Her son is amused by her query and says that no line was visible. She then wonders what was it all for – the partition and the entire killing and everything if there was not something in between to demarcate it. She is unable to understand the import of such a freedom and the senseless bloodshed that followed it. Ghosh portrays the sense of despair, agony, bewilderment and anxieties of the displaced masses in a subtle manner.

The dichotomy of the situation caused confusion and bewilderment in the minds of people, long after partition became a part of the history of the subcontinent. Emotionally they could hardly accept the Radcliffe's line and in their own mind wondered like the grandmother whether (they) would be able to *see* the border.

These people who had migrated to India, were economically secure and did not have the daunting task of rebuilding their lives from the debris, still shrunk inwardly at the term *refugee*. It was a term of abuse and the feeling of alienness plagues the minds of those who had to live with this psychological disquietitude. The psychic state of having lost the homeland due to some political misadventure and the adopted homeland never really becoming their own is the cause of the mental angst of displaced victims of partition. Their loss of identity results in rootlessness. They are like Samuel Butler's Protagonist *Higgs* in *Erehwon* lost in the South Sea Islands. He feels dreadful, being cut off from all one's kind and begins doubting his *own identity*.

This loss of identity is one of the fallouts of partition. These ill-omened victims had to live with their mental torture – never to be erased from memory like the stain of blood on Lady Macbeth's hands. Time and again it rankles them. As Ghosh succinctly puts it "They had drawn the borders believing in the pattern, in the enchantment of lines"[71]. They hoped fervently that the line would

cut the land into two bits, which would automatically be separated. However they found, that the lines drawn were *the shadow lines* – invisible. Therefore, these forlorn people lived in a suspended state of bewilderment – whether they *belonged* to this or that country. As David Oaken rightly suggests, this loss of identity results in alienation and rootlessness afflicting these woebegone people whose heart and soul lay in the country of their birth while their head remained in the adopted land making them miserable prisoners of divided selves living on the edge of the world and that they may drop off at any moment. They are always trying in vain to root or fix themselves after cutting their past.

It is Nayantara Sahagal's protagonist, Raj in her Novel, ***The Day in Shadow*** who advises Simrit, his lover to cut herself loose from the bleeding bits of past and get on with life. She then counter questions whether it was so easy to get rid of our past? She says, that it was deeply ingrained in our blood and that it continued to envelop our entire consciousness whether we liked it or not.

Like Simrit, man craves permanence out of life and to uproot himself when he has settled down peacefully tilts the equilibrium of his being, resulting in mental chaos and disenchantment of bereavement. Here is a constant dangling between temporality and permanence, which racks his very being.

Anita Desai, the existentialist writer, living in old Delhi too experienced the traumatic effects of partition in her early life. In her interview to Sunil Sethi she says: "I was ten at the time of partition and profoundly affected by it. So much in our life suddenly changed character"[72]. Her novel ***Clear light of Day*** "portrays the Indian Partition of 1947 with historical authenticity as well as experimental veracity"[73].

She herself explicates the theme of the novel in the interview with Sunil Sethi thus, "My novel is set in old Delhi and records the tremendous changes that a Hindu family goes through since 1947"[74]. The whole novel revolves round four children of the Das family, two brothers and two sisters who grew up in Old Delhi. Their life was uneventful and drab until the eventful year.

Life for Bim, the protagonist "is not linear but something that progresses in leaps and jerks. There are long still stretches-nothing happens – and then suddenly there is a clash-mighty deeds take place – momentous events . . . and then life subsides again into the backwaters till the next push, the next flood"[75]. She then emphasises the fact that the summer of 1947 was certainly one of them. It had a great significance for Bim for it changed the very nature of the Das household where nothing ever seemed to happen to alter the tenor of life. Like Bim says about the city she lives in, "Delhi doesn't change . . . It only decays"[76].

Desai, not only portrays the storm of partition that raged outside in the outskirts of the city but also inside the very family. As the partition riots raged outside with its "suspense, sensations and terrorist activities"[77] it affected Raja who was enamoured by Hyder Ali, his neighbour and Iqbal's poetry. It fanned in him a desire to join Jamia Millia for Islamic studies. But his father rips his desire instantly when he bluntly points out "You will be torn to bits, you will be burnt alive"[78].

Poor Raja, with a heavy heart is compelled to join Hindu College for English literature against his Islamic sensibilities. But his deep sympathy for Muslims in India and his ideological support for the formation of Pakistan turn his college-mates against him and he is branded a *traitor*. They keep watch over his actions. Fortunately, for Raja, he falls sick and is dissociated himself from all. Bim, his adoring sister nurses him with the devotion of a mother.

So many things happened – all at once: their parents demise, Hyder Ali's mysterious disappearance, Raja's illness, Mira Masi's death and the worst blow of all Raja cuts himself away from the family ties like the country that was cut into two. "The year witnessed the symbolic re-enactment of the historic partition in the partition of the Das family"[79].

Bim is forced to take up the painful responsibility of the Das household when Raja, the rightful heir, relinquishes his rights. This prompts her to see the events as being the most important thing that has ever happened to her as a consequence of which the memory of other events eluded her. The family falls apart when Raja makes his decision – to throw his lot in with Hyder Ali – his childhood idol and landlord, rather than his family. He abandons his sister Bim and his retarded brother Baba mercilessly – alone in the home to fend for themselves after his parents' death. The partition motif is reiterated in the second part of the novel.

Therefore the year is crucial in the life of the family as in the life of the country, as a major landmark. The trauma inflicted on a family by the breaking away of ties could never be blotted – a sad remnant of partition. "The novel is also about irredeemable relation between the public event and the private sense of order. Since 1947, the Das family hadn't had better contact than it had before"[80].

In ***Ice-Candy Man***, Bapsi Sidwa tells the poignant story of Partition through a handicapped Parsi child. The innocence and curiosity of the child and her perception of the familiar happy world crumbling about her subtly highlights the physical and mental horrors of the partition.

The rich Parsi child is cocooned in the happy world where people of all faiths lived in perfect harmony until the communal monster reared its head. Suddenly the people were identified by their religions, which sharpened their distinct differences. The Parsis, a miniscule community found themselves in the midst of a dilemma, which plagued them.

The fears and anxieties of the adults find their way into the heart of the little one who is beset by her own fears – childish though it seems, is profound in nature. She wonders aloud what would happen if the line of division passes through the middle of her house. This fear though innocent and child-like makes us smirk, nonetheless the possibility is not lost upon us. This spotlights the absurdity of dividing one nation.

The happy child is now tormented by the horrible scenes of horror around her. She seeks opinions and makes her own judgements on the Partition. The tender mind is tormented and haunted by fear. Her disturbed mind enacts the cruelty by tearing apart her dolls. Her repressed mind thus tries to find release through destructive action.

The Ice-Candy man, who hears the tales of terror, perhaps exaggerated accounts of killings and mutilation of women belonging to his own community is aroused to frenzy. He goes on a rampage, killing even his friends, not out of personal rancour but to relieve his agonised mind poisoned by the hatred. Thus

the never-ending vicious cycle is set in motion. The civilized and peace loving man's mind is suddenly gripped by the hatred and violence. The trauma experienced by the minds of both the hunter and the hunted are portrayed by the writers.

These star-crossed people with real *flesh and blood* were profoundly affected by the holocaust. Some lived with a sense of permanent loss and regret while others have lived with the trauma of rape, murder, mutilation and abduction of loved ones, some with the knowledge that they have killed – all embedded deep down in their consciousness. The physical wounds were quick to heal but the non-physical, less tangible ones which scarred their souls long buried under the load of years erupts like lava in all its fury, sometimes wrecking the person himself.

Khushwant Singh, who was born and brought up in what is now Pakistan has a deep yearning for the land of his birth. Despite bloody wars between the two countries and the fact that the leaders of both the nations spit abuse at each other, he goes back to it as the people are not hostile, on the contrary – loving. He compares himself to a Hindu who goes to Varanasi or a Muslim to Mecca on a pilgrimage and says: "It is my *teerthasthanam* where I perform my Haj, my Umra. This is where my roots are. I have nourished them with the tears of nostalgia and sheltered them from the venomous winds of hate with my bare hands"[81].

Surely, he is not alone in his resolve to never let hate replace the love for his neighbours. There must be millions who share his sentiments and are tortured alternately by the love-hate relationship for the land of their birth. He gives the example of his mother who was sour and sweet at the same time. She dubbed the Pakistanis as cruel, nevertheless gave her love to each of her neighbours in Pakistan through her son. This ambivalence, the mark of tortured consciousness is the hallmark of the *refugees*. Though they have made their home in the new land, their heart yearns for the land of their birth.

The writers have externalised the inner emotional tornadoes of their protagonists whose minds are a boiling cauldron of emotions. This tragic reality has been skillfully pictured by the novelists of existentialist concerns – themes like maladjustment, alienation, loss of communication, absurdity of human existence, quest for the ultimate meaning of life, isolation and quest for one's roots is the leit motif of these novels. The protagonists are shown struggling against or helplessly submitting to the relentless forces of absurd life.

These novels invariably leave the reader with a brooding sense of overwhelming depression and despair. The unimaginably gory horrors of the mind remains as permanent scars in the psyches of the faceless millions represented by the few portraits painted by the partition writers. Partition is not merely a geographical division of the land but it is physical as well as psychological division of people. It has left stormy waves of unhappiness upon

the seas of human minds. It still smarts, stings and pains the people across the borders. The novels mirror the horrors, the apprehensions of disheartened, displaced people – the victims of holocaust. The themes, plots, events and characters have parallels in history. These are not merely novels but shocking testimonies of cruelty of man to man. Racked by the psychological horrors that haunt their minds, these unfortunate individuals writhe agonisingly long after the dust of partition has settled down.

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